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Our Man in the Kremlin

# Khrushchev's Policies Could Have Meant War

Third in a Series

CPYRGHT

By Frank Gibney

On April 20, 1961, at 11 p.m. a trimly dressed foreign gentleman, handsome, red-haired and of medium height, walked without notice through the lobby of the Mount Royal Hotel in London and made his way to an inconspicuous suite upstairs.

The door was quickly opened. Inside the room, Col. Oleg Penkovsky had his first face-to-face meeting with British and American intelligence officers, the "interested parties" in the West whom he had been trying to contact for almost a year.

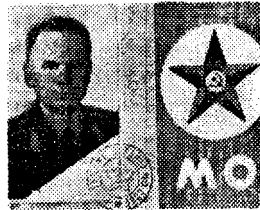
For hours, Penkovsky talked. He had brought with him from Moscow two packets of handwritten notes and documents, materials taken from Soviet top-secret files. The range of his information was almost encyclopedic—the design of new missiles, names of Soviet undercover intelligence agents in Europe, troop deployments in East Germany.

As the intelligence officers talked with him, they began to grasp not only the breadth of his knowledge about Soviet plans, but the intensity of his conviction that Moscow's dangerous "brinkmanship" in 1961 could well lead to war.

A lonely idealist, Penkovsky wanted neither money nor immediate asylum. Of the intelligence officers in London he asked only that he be given either British or American citizenship and some employment commensurate with his experience, if circumstances ever compelled him to flee the Soviet Union.

On another floor of the Mount Royal Hotel, Penkovsky had housed members of the 45-man Soviet delegation he headed. The delegation had been sent to London ostensibly to discuss trade prospects, but actually to gather intelligence, of an industrial and military nature. It was a sign of the Communist regime's trust in Penkovsky that he was assigned to lead it.

Throughout this first two-week stay in London, Penkovsky continued to hold night meetings with the



British and American intelligence officers, whom he knew only by their code names, the British intelligence officers called "Grille" and "Miles" and the Americans, "Alexander" and "Oslav."

Since the U-2 surveillance flights had been abandoned in 1960, the West badly needed fresh information on Soviet work in missilery and new rocket technology. As a missile specialist himself, Penkovsky had a wealth of technical background on the state of Soviet missile readiness—and most importantly, plans for missile production and deployment. The configuration of missile sites, the types of troops used, warheads, performance details—all this information Penkovsky possessed, from his own experience and his close association as aide to Marshal Varentsov, the Soviet tactical missile commander. In that London hotel room Penkovsky began the vital flow of information which, barely a year later, enabled the West to understand the seriousness of Khrushchev's threat in Cuba, as well as recognize the exact nature of his missile weapons there.

In the following excerpt from the papers, Penkovsky outlines the real facts behind the Soviet missile effort. These notes represent only a tiny portion of the information Penkovsky revealed in this area. For 16 years, Penkovsky provided a stream of reliable intelligence

on Khrushchev's missile build-up. His guidance lay behind the quick identification of the Cuba-based missiles in aerial photographs. Also, his reports of Khrushchev's lagging production on long-range missiles explained the reasoning behind the risky shipment of medium-range Soviet missiles to Cuba.

Millions breathed a sigh of relief over President Kennedy's face-down of Khrushchev's Cuban threat in October, 1962. But until now only a small group of intelligence experts knew the great contribution made by Col. Penkovsky to this U.S. victory.

By Oleg Penkovsky

Khrushchev is blabbing that we are ready, we have everything. That is so much idle talk. He talks about the Soviet Union's capability to send missiles to every corner of the world, but he has not done anything about it, because he knows that we are actually not ready.

Of course we can send our big missiles in different directions, as far as the United States or Cuba. But we are not yet capable of launching a planned missile attack to destroy definite targets long-range. As Marshal Varentsov, who commands the Ground Missile forces, tells me: "We still have a long way to go before we actually achieve the things about which Khrushchev keeps talking and boasting."

Of course, there have been fine achievements in developing tactical and operational short-range missiles. But it is too early to speak of our STRATEGIC missiles as perfected. Many of the big ones are still on the drawing boards, in the prototype stage or undergoing tests. There are altogether not more than a few dozen of these—not the "shower" of missiles with which Khrushchev has been threatening the West.

Only the smaller (IRBM) missiles are in production. The R-12 missile, now being mass produced, has a range of 2,500 kilometers (1,550 miles). Our "cruise" missile has been adopted for use by the submarine fleet as well as ground troops. But our big R-14 missile is only in the development stage. The range of the R-14 with a nuclear warhead is 2,800 kilometers (2,800 miles).

Often a new model missile

stage—in fact the tests may have proved unsuccessful. But there is Khrushchev, already screaming to the entire world about his "achievements" in new types of Soviet weapons.

## Cosmonauts Die

All the money made available from the military reorganization is put into missile production, and sputnik required the combined efforts of all available Soviet scientists and technical personnel, with the entire technological capacity of the country at their disposal.

Marshal Varentsov warns in private conversations that that we do not have enough qualified people in the missile and sputnik programs, that training is inadequate, the quality of production poor. Quantity is inadequate, also. Accidents and all sorts of troubles are daily occurrences. In this connection, there is much talk about shortcomings in the field of electronics.

There have been many cases during the test launchings of missiles when they have hit inhabited areas, railroad tracks, etc., instead of the designated targets, after deviating several hundred kilometers from their prescribed course.

Sometimes Khrushchev's pushing for premature achievement in missiles and sputniks has disastrous results.

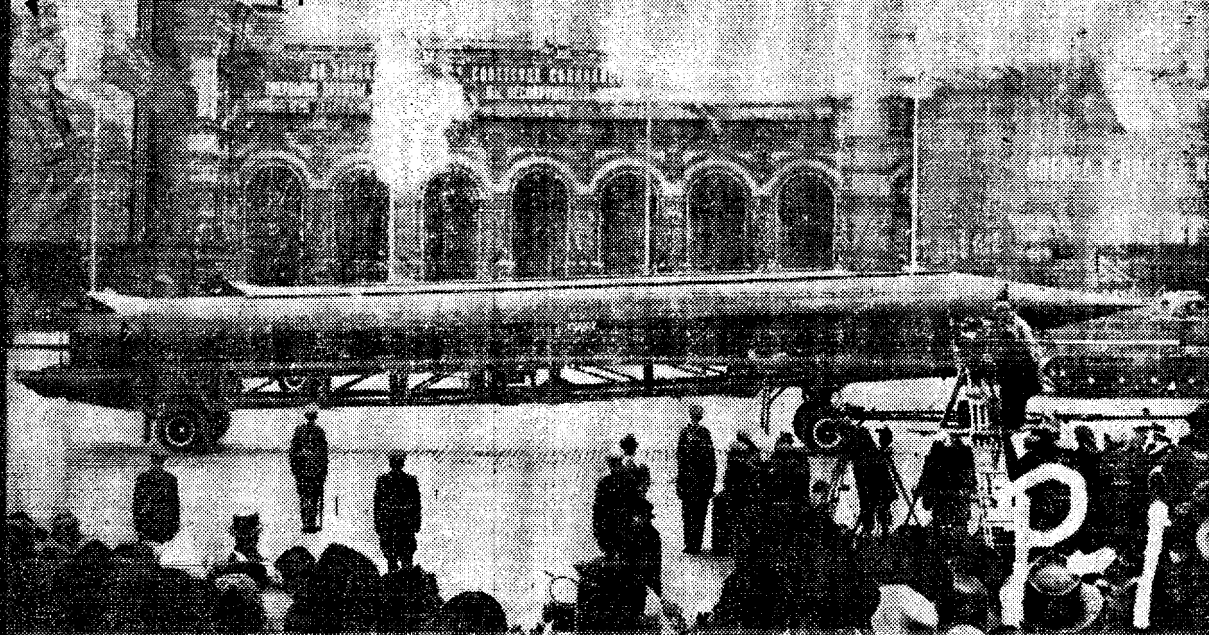
Several sputniks were launched into the stratosphere and never heard from again. They took the lives of several specially trained cosmonauts.

The sudden death of Marshal Nedelin, former chief of our missile forces, was another case in point.

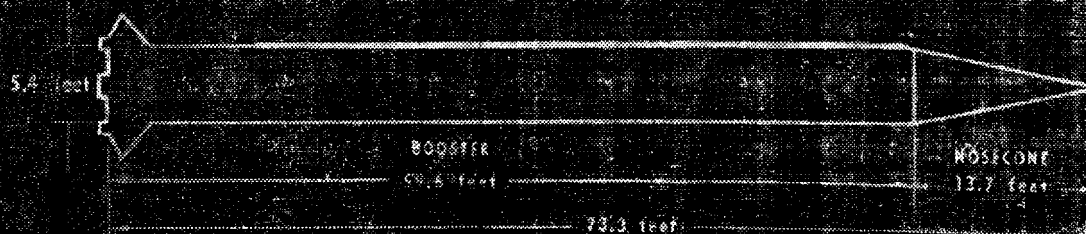
Khrushchev had been demanding that his specialists create a missile engine powered by nuclear energy. The laboratory work for such an engine had even been completed prior to the 43d Anniversary of the October Revolution in 1960, and the people involved wanted to give Khrushchev a "present" on this anniversary—a missile powered by nuclear energy.

Present during the tests on this new engine were Marshal Nedelin, many specialists on nuclear equipment, and representatives of the government committees. When the countdown was completed, the

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Soviet MRBM - Sandal SS-4

**KHRUSHCHEV'S PRIDE**—A medium-range ballistic missile is displayed in Moscow. Below it are sizes.

missile failed to leave the launching pad. After 15 to 20 minutes had passed, Nedelin came out of the shelter, followed by the others. Suddenly there was an explosion caused by the mixture of the nuclear substance and other components. Over 300 people were killed.

A few people miraculously survived, but all of them were in deep shock. Some of them died soon afterward. What was brought to Moscow were not Nedelin's and other victims' remains, but urns filled with dirt. Yet we all had read in the "truthful" official government statements printed in the newspaper Pravda and Izvestiya only that Nedelin died, "... in the line of duty—in an air accident," and we also read about how these bodies were cremated, as well as other details about the funeral.

**More Space Failures**

This is not the first time that a missile accident took place. There had been others before and the government keeps silent about them.

When Khrushchev announced at the beginning of 1960 that the Soviet Union possessed a completely new and terrifying type of ballistic missile, he actually had in mind the order he had issued to invent or prepare this new type of propellant based on nuclear energy. Some of the work in this direction proved quite successful, even after Nedelin's accident, but it is still far from what Khrushchev had in mind. There is a big lag in electronics.

There were more accidents during tests. In this respect my sympathies are with the Americans. If they have an accident, it is all in the papers; everyone knows about it. But in our country everything is kept secret.

For example: There were several unsuccessful launchings of sputniks with men killed prior to Gagarin's flight. Either the missile would explode on the launching pad, or it would go up and never return.

When Gagarin made his flight, it was said officially that there was not a single camera in his sputnik. This was a big lie. There was a

whole system of cameras with different lenses for taking pictures and for intersection. The photographic equipment was turned on and off during the flight by the astronaut. But Khrushchev tells everybody that nothing was photographed. Photographic equipment has been installed on all sputniks, but this has been denied in order to prevent the Americans from launching espionage sputniks, or as we call them: "spies in the sky."

Right now we have a certain number of missiles with nuclear warheads capable of reaching the United States or South America; but these are single missiles, not in mass production, and they are far from perfect. Every possible measure is taken to improve the missiles and their production.

Money is saved everywhere and allocated to the building of "kindergartens."

That is the slang expression we use for missile production. Many different towns have been specially built for these scientists and technical and engineering personnel. Scientists and engi-

neers not only have been awarded decorations and medals, but some have been awarded the title of Hero of Socialist Labor three or four times.

They have received the Lenin Prize, and other prizes. The work of these people is not publicized and their pictures do not appear in the newspapers.

I have already heard some talk about a woman astronaut being readied for a flight into the stratosphere in a sputnik for propaganda purposes. All the higher commanders think that such a flight will have a strong propaganda effect. The launching is planned for the beginning of 1963.\*

**THE VIGILANCE** of the Western powers must not be weakened by the shortcomings mentioned above. If at the present time the Soviet ballistic missiles are still far from being perfect, in two or three years—perhaps even sooner—Khrushchev will have achieved his goal.

In 1961, a firm directive was issued to equip the missile weapons. This was by a special decision of the Central Committee.

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tral Committee CPSU. Marshal Varentsov made the following comment: "They say we must give our brother Slavs missile weapons. So we give them missiles now, and later they will stick a knife in our back."

In my opinion as a General Staff officer, it will take a year or a year and a half for us to be able to equip all the Eastern European countries with missiles. In order to stop this armament of Khrushchev's and his attempts to launch an attack, the Western countries must triple both their efforts at unity and increase their armaments. Only then will Khrushchev realize that he is dealing with a strong adversary.

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